


THE EYE SHIELD



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ALL CHANGE, PLEASE!

By Liam Callaghan

Part 3 of 3

Series 7 (1993):

Many a true word is spoken in jest - what was that I was saying about getting rid of the Helmet of Justice? Sure enough, the last symbol of the old Knightmare is gone, replaced by a new design. To be fair, the new helmet does look more like a typical knight's helmet, but that's the only thing in its favour. If you talk to someone about Knightmare and mention the Helmet of Justice, they will think of the original one, so ingrained is it into our collective memory. Indeed, when I first stumbled on this website back in 2003, I had completely forgotten about the change in design.

The reason this change was introduced was to allow the dungeoneer the occasional use of "sight magic" - either a potion, or more usually a spell. This makes what was initially just a mere alteration to the iconography of the series into a fundamental change to the game-play. The dungeoneer is not supposed to see what is going on - that's what the advisors are there for! Now, granted, it was usually used to give the dungeoneer a helping hand on the floor puzzles, which had claimed three dungeoneers each in the previous two series (three if you count the Block and Tackle), but it's still going against the essence of the show. Whoever it was, pondering the question "What shall we do for series 7?" who said, "Let's have the dungeoneers able to see what's going on!" should have their eyes pecked out.

Okay, that's that rant out of the way - on to the rest of the changes. Aside from the sight magic, there's no major change to the game-play from the previous series, although there are a lot of visual changes to the Dungeon itself. The "exterior" scenes are mainly confined to level one now, with the later levels attempting to return to a CGI-style interior feel, reminiscent of the earlier series. That's fine, and indeed the two main floor puzzles in this series - the Trial By Spikes and Play Your Cards Right - are very evocative of chambers from the earlier series. Thumbs-up on that score. It's also worth pointing out that these two rooms put an end to four of the seven quests from this series, some more deservingly than others (notably Naila, whose stupid advisors didn't seem to twig that the numbers referred to squares rather than steps).

The other main visual change was the Sewers of Goth for level three. Moving his headquarters to the sewers - who'd have guessed Lord Fear was a Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles fan? Not very Knightmare-like

in the traditional sense, but considering the original intent was to make it like a "human computer game", it's a reasonable effort at getting back to basics.

As for changes in cast, both Treguard and Lord Fear have new assistants this series; first seen is Lissard, played simperingly well by Clifford Barry, who - doubling as Brother Strange - is the last really great addition to the cast. As characters go, though, Lissard isn't very effective - he's a direct replacement for Skarkill, who did bag himself a victim back in series 5, and came close plenty more times. Lissard, on the other hand, makes only one foray into the Dungeon and is mainly seen in spyglass sequences. Clifford Barry's best work was definitely as the enigmatic Brother Strange.

As for Treguard's new assistant, Majida... well, Pickle's replacement does not have the same appeal. She doesn't seem to serve any useful purpose at all - the status updates at the start of each episode are delivered by Treguard, so that's one of Pickle's jobs that she doesn't do. She does still fetch things for the teams, but her main function appears to be stealing Treguard's line, "Enter, stranger!" - whoever suggested that should have their vocal cords removed. If you ignore *that*, her only other real function is saying words to the effect of, "it's not fair, he can't even see where he's going!" - that's the whole point! Treguard was obviously right when he said a genie was not related to a genius.

The other addition to the cast is Anthony Donovan as Grimaldine, and, more memorably, the Brollachan. I have to say "more memorably" because Grimaldine was another character I'd clean forgotten about until I read up on this site. He's a powerful wizard to be sure, and not someone you'd want to cross, but ultimately not someone who sticks in the memory. He might have managed to achieve this if he'd stuck around for another series, as there was definitely potential in him to be a strong neutral character, but, like so many one-series characters, he didn't have as much sticking power. Although to be fair, he did better than Jacquelin Joyce, both of whose characters had escaped my memory in the interim.

As for the Brollachan, it is the closest they get these days to a wall monster, although it can appear anywhere. The major difference between the Brollachan and the old wall monsters was that the Brollachan didn't actually know the answers to its own questions, so as long as they didn't lie, the teams could get away with anything. It's a shame, really - the Brollachan could have been even more memorable otherwise, but as it was he just appeared at random, and without much point if I'm fair.

The only other point worth mentioning is the minor tweak to Treguard's apparel here - he still looks like the lord of the manor, but his

appearance is definitely a shade more casual. It's only a minor thing, but if I have to be the judge, I'd say that it shouldn't have been done.

To sum up, then? Dear, oh dear. I've already made it clear, the whole Helmet of Justice/sight magic issue is enough to ruin the series irreparably. The attempts to restore riddles to the Dungeon didn't really work, and the changes in cast were unremarkable at best. While there were some memorable new chambers, the show was definitely on its way down. The damage had been done.

Series 8 (1994):

Changes galore again here, but that's only to be expected, as this final series of Knightmare features a change in director. Martin Cairns took over from Jimmy McKinney, who had helmed the previous four years, and, as McKinney did back in series 4, Cairns was quick to make his mark in several very specific ways.

Firstly, the antechamber has been redesigned. Instead of chairs and a table, there's a "magical viewing pool", full of water (and the odd pencil dropped in by an advisor), and everyone has to stand. Moreover, it's not just the Powers That Be that have to stand - Lord Fear's new headquarters seem to be lacking chairs as well. I can only assume that Martin Cairns has a phobia of chairs, because the inability of anybody to sit down is really silly, particularly in the case of Treguard and Lord Fear.

The other big difference in the antechamber is the addition of the portal that Treguard winds open at the start of each quest. To be fair, it looks like the entrance to a real dungeon. The only trouble with that is, the Dungeon isn't a dungeon in that sense; it's more of a magical labyrinth than an actual dungeon. In any case, having a physical entrance to the Dungeon does away with some of the mystique.

The mystique is further abolished by having a door open and four children rushing in at the sound of "Enter, stranger!" Gone is the magic of having the dungeoneer call out the names of his or her advisors, and seeing them appear as if by magic on the chairs provided. As Majida pointed out, in a rare moment of intelligence, it means they don't know who the dungeoneer is at first!

And while we're still in the antechamber, there's a couple of changes made to when Treguard and Majida are kitting up the dungeoneer. First off, you can now put clue objects in the knapsack, although still only two at a time. This is mainly because of the second change, the addition of a new gizmo, the Reach Wand. Yes, like Jimmy McKinney with the eye shield, Martin Cairns has introduced a new and unnecessary piece of equipment at the start of the quest. Firstly, the

wand itself is universally regarded as unnecessary, and I can't say I disagree. Even though I quite enjoyed the rune puzzle at the time, the wand does make the show less medieval and more technological.

As to the whole "you can now put clue objects in the knapsack" issue - theoretically that's no change to the game-play, but this overlooks the fact that you can physically put as many objects as you like into the knapsack. By forcing dungeoneers to carry large objects in their hands, that ensured they could only take two. Now, I know there wasn't any cheating of this kind in the show, but this change meant that it was theoretically possible. Indeed, if you come to a clue room and can carry all the objects, why not put them all in the knapsack? Any of them could be useful, after all!

One other aesthetic change made to this series is the change in Lord Fear's apparel. It's good in some parts, but bad in others. The new helmet that looks like a skull and the cape are both good changes, but the plain black outfit under the cape makes the whole thing look more like an improvised fancy-dress outfit than anything else. In his original outfit, Lord Fear looked like an evil overlord. Now he just looks like a kid trying to look like an evil overlord. If they had put the skull and cloak of this series onto the armour of his original incarnation, then perhaps they'd have got a really good look, but as it is, it's just wrong.

Moving on to the Dungeon itself, all the "exterior" locations have been removed, in an attempt to get back to the style of the earlier series. This, in theory, is not a problem - it's purely aesthetic, and makes no difference to the actual game-play. Indeed, if original director Sally Freeman had stayed with the show's run all the way through, the Dungeon may well have acquired a reasonably similar look at this point. However, there is a problem with the new look as it turned out, in that it doesn't feel medieval anymore. Even series 7 still had that medieval feel, but now, the "human computer game" element has taken over completely. Another symptom of this is that Smirkenorff is now stuck in a pit, and apart from the closing credits of the final episode, he doesn't do any flying this series. Mind you, impressive though his flights were, they didn't add anything to the actual game-play, so on that level, it doesn't really make that big a difference.

Still, this talk of Smirky brings me on to characters. Arguably the most memorable addition is Stiletta, whom I remembered mainly because of her first appearance, where she refused to help Richard, and rightly so. His hapless advisors deliberately disregarded the information in the scroll and assumed that a key would automatically be useful in their quest. Now, in the absence of any clues, that's a reasonable assumption, but

when you've got a scroll telling you exactly what you need to take, you deserve everything you get. No good saying, "We haven't got it but we can tell you where it is" - how do they know someone else hasn't come along and taken it? But I digress. Stiletta herself - in that very revealing outfit - was the last of the warrior women. The only trouble is, her character is a "warrior thief", but her accent hardly matches her nature. She sounds too upper-class! Considering that before Iona Kennedy came along, the warrior woman was played by the same actress as the female arch-villain, one could argue that maybe Joanne Heywood might have been better cast as Maldame.

Speaking of whom, as far as I can discern, Maldame came about purely as a result of Iona Kennedy's pregnancy, as she seems to be a direct replacement for her previous character, Greystagg. I guess the slim figure of Greystagg would be difficult to pull off with a pregnancy bump, and it explains why Maldame was only ever seen talking down from on high at the top of Linghorm Tower. But honestly, there's no comparison between the two characters. The ever-regal Greystagg had an air of moral ambiguity. Maldame just came across as a nasty lady who didn't like trespassers on her premises. Maybe they were trying to preserve Greystagg's integrity, but they could have come up with a better replacement than Maldame. She's another of those characters whose existence I'd clean forgotten about until I stumbled upon this website. Still, memorable or not, in this series she was quite an important character.

Another important character in this final series was Snapper-Jack, for a crucial reason - he brought riddles back to Nightmare on a regular basis. Every dungeoneer who reached level two had to get past him, and again in level three. (Not that any team faced more than one trio of riddles from him, but if Nathan had survived the fireball room, he would have had to pit his wits against him a second time.) For services to riddles, Snapper-Jack is to be commended. The problem was, like so many good ideas from these later series, they missed a trick, and it could have worked so much better. By bringing back the riddles, they had the perfect opportunity to bring back the reward for being able to solve them, but no, information was still given freely in scrolls and spyglasses.

That's basically it as far as the general format is concerned. The redesigned life force sequence of a pie is barely worth mentioning - it's a silly design, but we still know instinctively what it represents. And I'm not going to go on about the Short Cut, because as I've said before, this concept was actually first created in series 5, with the demise of Duncan, who perished in the Corridor of Blades after going down too far in the

Descender, and Pickle's curiosity as to where they actually did end up if it wasn't level two. Obviously when they created it, they didn't realise what they were doing, but three years later, it fit perfectly into the mythology, if you like. Considering that Nightmare was originally meant to be a "human computer game", and some computer games had shortcuts that allowed you to skip levels, it's consistent in that respect. Obviously, I know it wasn't brought in for that purpose - if it had been, it would have happened earlier - but still, I don't have an issue with it. There's really no need to take issue with it, when there's so much else in series 8 already to complain about!

So, in conclusion, series 8 is considered to be the weakest, and I would definitely agree. However, it's worth reminding everyone that the changes that led to a decline in quality in this show didn't happen overnight. It's true that there are some dire alterations made in this series, but when you look at the changes that were made in the previous two series, this was just the final nail in an already quite secure coffin. Over the course of series 6 and 7, with the drastic changes to both the iconography and the game-play of the series, the producers strayed from the path. And we know what happens in Nightmare when you stray from the path, as Gavin and friends found out back in series 3.

Apart from the presence of Hugo Myatt, you could have called this last series of Nightmare something else, and people wouldn't have batted an eyelid. People might have gone, "This is a bit like that old show, you remember, that thing back in the '80s? What's it called... Nightmare!" - "Oh, I remember Nightmare! Yeah, that used to be good..."

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 7/8. Level 2/3.

PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT

This is a very nice, atmospheric level three challenge. Starkly combining the cutting edge, VR-begotten technomagical world of Goth with shades of the early series (which featured several references to and challenges based on playing cards), this was an aptly tricky test for any team bright enough to reach level three, and a ruthless exploiter of any shortcomings in the advisors' brainwork and/or teamwork that had yet to come to light. Simon's team and Alex's team both discovered this to their cost, and the fact that this challenge killed the first two teams to attempt it always makes it seem that significant bit harder and more ruthless.

My one criticism of Play Your Cards Right is that there was no variety in the card sequences. Once you'd seen one team's attempt at the challenge, you'd seen them all, which certainly sucked some of the tension out of the whole situation by the time Barry got round to completing it. The fact that the sequence was the same every time did not make the challenge any easier for the teams, of course, as they (unlike us) had not seen the preceding episodes of series 7 when they attempted it, so there was always that element of doubt that the next team to be faced with the Cards would know what to do, and I certainly don't think the whole process of attempting the challenge is at all obvious the first time you see it, despite what Treguard may think: *"Boys, you were looking for something devious, when all you had to do... is follow suit."* - **Treguard**.

Inevitably, a seeing-eye spell or potion would be employed here to allow the dungeoneer to see themselves and the array of cards, which was actually completely unnecessary and not very nice to see, very much like all the other seeing-eye spell appearances! The Cards appeared once in series 8 (this time on level two, which Goth had become by this stage) and this was actually the only occasion during the final series when sight magic was used. Disappointingly, even at this stage, the puzzle still had the same card sequence, yet Nathan's advisors still encountered problems when the Hearts ran out, so clearly this team hadn't been watching series 7 on video even half as much as I had!

PUZZLE PAGE

Lego Nightmare V

There have always been two great passions in my life - Nightmare is one, and Lego is the other. My extensive Lego collection dates from 1979 to the present day, and I have used a few carefully selected pieces and minifigures to recreate some scenes from Nightmare, thus combining my two passions! Unfortunately, the pictures were taken with a disposable camera of doubtful quality and are very blurry, but I'm sure you'll get the basic idea!

Which dungeoneer just about to ignore Folly's advice and get blown up as a result?

- a) Danny
- b) Richard I
- c) Martin I
- d) Mark



Answer: a)

EASTERN PROMISE

By Rosey Collins

Part 3 of 3

Nemanor captained his crewless ship for many years. If the *Cloud Walker* had a secret of flight, he never discovered it, but the odd adventure did come his way.

He saw the genie again, but only once. Things had just quietened down after an incident with a western dragon in a strange land that had somehow latched on to his ship. Nemanor was at his lookout post on the bridge when he heard laboured breathing behind him.

"You!" He turned on the staircase, and pointed his sword at the intruder. "Stowaway! If there's one thing I hate more than Lord Fear, it's stowaways. And," he said, recognising her at last, "if there is one thing I hate more than stowaways, it's you!"

He began to advance down the steps.

"So." The genie, who was very out of breath, ran past him and stopped at the steps, looking around her. "That is two things you hate more than... who?"

"He is an evil - "

"I don't have time. You must hide me."

Nemanor laughed. "Hide you from an enemy, you mean? Or perhaps more than one. Have you wronged every creature in the western world?"

"No." She turned towards the portal at the ship's stern. "Where does this lead?"

"To a terrible place. Leave my ship before I throw you overboard."

The genie laughed. "You have seen how well I take to the water."

He tightened his grip on his sword. "Then I'll kill you."

"You can't. I am a genie, remember?"

"Yes," said Nemanor, seeing something out of the corner of his eye, lying just below the steps to the bridge. He began to move towards it. "I remember. Incidentally, how is the child, Scheherazade?"

"She is well," said the genie. "For now. She is to marry a sultan tomorrow. Then things will not go so well for her, I think, but she will be all right. Oh." She paused as her eye fell upon an object up on the bridge. "Is that your astrolabe? There, you see, things aren't so bad after all. Tell me, have you had many adventures since I made you captain?"

Nemanor stooped, and his hand closed around the object he had seen. Rising to his full height, he said, "You did me no favour, genie. You

cursed me, and I will have revenge!"

The genie crossed her arms, and looked at him with the expression of a defiant child. "How?"

"I told you I knew the stories," he said. "There was one about a genie, as I recall, trapped in a bottle for thousands of years."

"You can do nothing," said the genie. "I have seen the future, remember? You may trap me, but I will escape."

"I have my plans for this," said Nemanor, brandishing his bottle and removing the stopper. "I know where to take it. You will never be found."

"Maybe," the genie said, with a glance towards the sky. Then suddenly, her shape dissolved and she was sucked into the bottle. Nemanor stared at it, uncomprehending. Had she done this of her own free will?

Suddenly the ship gave a violent jerk. Nemanor fell forward, and both bottle and stopper were knocked from his hands. He looked up just in time to see them both disappearing into the portal. He silently cursed his clumsiness. She could escape from the bottle at any time, unless someone happened to seal it, but why would they? He did not know what would become of her in that strange word, but he had a feeling she would survive it well enough.

These thoughts passed through his head in a moment. Then he heard a deafening roar behind him. Rolling over onto his back, he saw the cause of the disturbance. Nemanor found himself staring into a huge, bearded, elderly face, its eyes blazing red with anger. This man sat astride a giant reined crocodile, and a hawk sat upon his wrist.

"The genie!" the creature roared. "Where is she?"

"It cannot be!" said Nemanor. "Aguares!"

"The genie has wronged me!" screeched Aguares.

"But... but... you are the grand duke of the eastern regions of Hell! Has she really wronged *you*?"

"Beyond endurance! All my thirty-one infernal legions are searching high and low for the creature!"

"Oh." Nemanor perked up a little at this news. "She has gone through that portal."

He pointed, and Aguares looked. Then his red eyes glowed redder, and he screamed, "There is no portal! You dare lie to Aguares?"

"What?" said Nemanor. "But... it was there, I swear it! It was not always there, though. It must have closed."

If only he had kept hold of the bottle, Nemanor thought. He could have handed that genie over to her fate and, more to the point, he would not have just angered the duke of the eastern regions of Hell.

Aguares' red eyes narrowed. "Where did this portal lead?"

"To a realm known as Nightmare. It's... difficult to describe."

"If it is there," said Aguares, "I shall find it. But if I do not find the Daughter of the Setting Moon whose Eyes are like Daggers in the Hearts of Men who Ride the Great Caravan of the Sultan..."

Nemanor waited.

"I shall come back for you."

With that Aguares pulled on his crocodile's reins, and drove it out onto the open ocean.

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 5

Quest: The Sword of Freedom.

Dungeoneer: Kelly II.

Advisors: Keighley, Tarin and Rachel.

Home town: Rochdale, Lancashire.

Team score: 4 out of 10.

These lasses were never going to be given the chance to win, but at least they managed to make the final episode-and-a-bit of series 5 fairly engaging.

Level One: In the Wolfglade, Kelly picks up a purse of silver and a candle from a clue table. A lengthy spyglass sequence reveals practically everything the team needs to know for the rest of the level - Skarkill has taken delivery of his new hobgoblin, Tiny, and from Lord Fear's detailed instructions, the team learns the password - "rat pack" - as well as the fact that the Gatemaster is guarding the exit from level one, and will let Kelly pass if she can present a token from Gwendoline. Kelly then progresses to Wolfenden, where Sylvester Hands cons her into exchanging the silver for a goblin horn, which he says will protect her in the Greenwood.

Kelly reaches the charcoal burner's camp, where an assassin is lurking. Treguard and Pickle build up the sense of danger as much as they can and tell the team to do something to defend themselves, thus coaxing them to make the "mistake" of blowing the goblin horn. The assassin is scared away, but Gwendoline rushes in and has a right go at Kelly for blowing a goblin caller in the Greenwood. Once Kelly has explained the situation, Gwendoline says they will journey together until they find Hands, so that Kelly can point him out as proof that he was the one who supplied the horn.

Conveniently, they find Hands drinking ale outside a farmhouse, but he runs off as soon as the advisors identify him. Gwendoline says she will catch up with him later, before inviting Kelly to sit with her at the table and have a drink. As Gwendoline gets tanked up, the advisors remember that they are supposed to ask her for a token to present to the Gatemaster, but Gwendoline still thinks Kelly is a bit stupid so she sets the team a little challenge - to name two of Robin Hood's Merry Men.

They quickly come up with "Little John and Friar Tuck" so Gwendoline agrees to let Kelly have the green arrow. Next, in a pleasingly amusing filler scene, Hands rushes in to take his revenge on Kelly for dobbing him in to the Green Warden, but Sir Hugh turns up and "rescues" Hands from Kelly's supposedly vicious clutches.

A quick jaunt past a blocker and across the Path of Defence on the causeway leads to the final room of the level, where the Gatemaster is on guard as promised. In another pleasing but pointless Nightmare moment, Tiny the hobgoblin turns up, but the Gatemaster immediately gets rid of him with a lightning blast from his staff. Kelly is then able to present the green arrow, and the Gatemaster grants permission for her to fly on Smirkenorff to level two. The advisors have to spot when Smirky is approaching the castle, and Kelly has to call out "Abashkrav" to make him land, but I don't think this concept works very well with the pre-recorded flight sequence.

Level Two: Kelly meets Hordriss, who proposes a bargain that involves Kelly taking his staff with her and holding it in Aesandre's blue fire (*"the fire that freezes rather than burns"* - **Hordriss**) to restore its magic powers. After an unnecessarily long time, the team agrees to do this for Hordriss, and he fixes the staff across Kelly's shoulders so that she can still carry two clue objects, again bending the rules for his own ends, just like he did with Alex and the book. A clue room follows, where Kelly picks up a large book and a bar of gold, but the season is almost over and the next room is the last. Icicles hang from the ceiling and the blue fire is present, as is a spyglass. The team sees Lord Fear and Aesandre discussing their plans to freeze the entire Dungeon as a last-ditch attempt to defeat Kelly before the end of the questing season. Treguard states that Hordriss is the only one who can get Kelly back safely, so she holds his staff in the blue fire and then shouts "Malefact" three times to summon him. Hordriss appears in a flash of lightning, accepts the staff, and accompanies Kelly back to the Great Hall of Nightmare, where a terse conversation between Treguard and a frozen Lord Fear is carried out, and the series draws to a close.

Summary: They didn't seem like a particularly good or a particularly bad team, and they were led into the one "mistake" they made by the production team, so it's impossible to say how they would have fared under "normal" circumstances, i.e. if they hadn't just been filling in until the series ended.

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 1/2/3. Level 1/2.

CATACOMBITES

I'm sure that the rattling, roaring, moaning noise made by these giant skeletal creatures (or was it the same one every time?) was scary enough on its own to put the wind up most young Knightmare fans. The catacombite was used sparingly - two appearances in series 1, two in series 2, and one in series 3 - yet the creature seems to have stuck firmly in many people's memories, despite the fact that I carelessly overlooked it for this feature for ten years!

The origin of the catacombite is explored in detail in the first Knightmare book and as is noted, the creature could never have existed in fleshy form - it was created by the Gruagach, who magically warped the bones of some of his victims to an enormous size, and then fused them together to create four many-jointed limbs and a pelvic saddle, which supported the skull. The monster was then animated by dark magic, and pitted mercilessly against those who came to challenge the Dungeon, and as we know, the Gruagach's game was not nearly as fair as Treguard's. Gruesome, macabre and scary, I'm sure you'll agree.

As for the programme itself, the catacombite was almost always encountered early on level two, except during its first appearance, which took place on level one: *"Some spiteful sorcerer has brought it up here especially to annoy me!"* - **Lillith**. It was dungeoneer Simon's task to neutralise the monster with a FREEZER spell, and then crawl underneath it to reach the correct door. *"Crouch, Simon, crouch... avoid contact at all costs."* - **Treguard**. Later in series 1, dungeoneer Richard's task was much simpler - just grab a pie from under the catacombite's nose and then exit safely through one of the doors it wasn't actually standing in front of!

The catacombite next appeared during Mark's winning quest in series 2, and a FREEZER spell was required once more to neutralise the monster. This time, Merlin was the source of the magic - rather than Lillith - and Mark did not have to bother crawling underneath the catacombite after he had picked up the letter F it was guarding. The very next quest - Tony's - promised a rather interesting scenario involving the catacombite, as the team apparently needed a gauntlet to subdue the monster in some way (probably to freeze it again!) so that they could reach the safe exit.

"Catacombites, if handled at all, must be handled with kid gloves." - **Treguard**. However, as they had left the required item in the clue room, Tony had to use an unsafe exit, leading him right into one of Mogdred's little playpens, as everyone knows!

After this appearance (in the sixth episode of series 2) the catacombite took a lengthy break from Knightmare, before making one final appearance during the fourteenth episode of series 3, just after Martin had leapt off the Spindizzy. This time, there was no freezing to be done, and not even anything to pick up - Martin just had to dash across the room in front of the catacombite while it roared at him! Pointless as this scene is in the context of the quest itself, I can't fault it for atmosphere, especially with the spooky addition of a green skull ghost!

Fear Factor: 10 Terrifying!

Killer Instinct: 5 Hazardous to life force, and part of Tony's downfall.

Humanity: 4 The component parts were once human...

Gore Factor: 10 Probably Knightmare's most gruesome monster.

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 6

Quest: The Sword of Freedom.

Dungeoneer: Chris Green.

Advisors: Nicholas, Gavin and Simon.

Home town: Ruislip, North London.

Team score: 6 out of 10.

Taking up the entirety of the final two episodes of series 6, Chris and team were instrumental in the destruction of Red Death, and did a pretty good job keeping us interested during the build-up to this fairly exciting pay-off for the underlying plot of the series.

Level One: Before Chris enters the Dungeon, Hordriss appears on the screen and announces that he intends to divest himself of his last vestiges of ambiguity and viewer appeal by joining the Powers That Be (thanks to Lord Fear's disgraceful behaviour), and that he is dispatching Sidriss into the Dungeon to help Chris with his quest, a prospect that Pickle does not relish. When Chris finally embarks, he steps on the Sword at the Hall of Choice (at least it wasn't the Crown again!) and then finds his level one clue objects on a wooden bench. A spyglass sequence reveals Lord Fear demanding confirmation from Skarkill that he has captured Elita and locked her in a chest. Skarkill says he has, and that Julius Scaramonger has the key, which he intends to sell to the Grimwolds, who have apparently always wanted their own elf!

From the bench, Chris picks up a bar of gold and a mallet, which the clue scroll identifies as "The Acme Persuader". Both items are put to use in Wolfenden, where a drunken and depressed Julius Scaramonger agrees to part with the key to Elita's chest in exchange for the gold, but only after he has been bashed on the head several times by a giant manifestation of the mallet. When Chris arrives at the causeway, Sidriss turns up to reveal the code. A scroll has to be picked up on the way across, revealing the password - "passport" - which is duly used to pass a blocker. Chris then turns up in Wolfenden again, where he releases Elita from her chest prison. She takes him to Smirkenorff - who is very grumpy because Elita hasn't been feeding him recently, thanks to Skarkill - and they all fly to level two.

Level Two: Chris makes use of a spyglass (the only one ever to show a

sequence not featuring Lord Fear) and sees Greystagg and Heggatty chatting about their coven's lack of witch amber, and the heavily related subject of Greystagg's refusal of Lord Fear's proposed alliance. Chris picks up a bag of gold and a wooden grinder, both of which he then swaps with Ah Wok for a witch's robe and a working broomstick. This disguise fools Sylvester Hands, who is persuaded to part with some witch amber in exchange for a bit of phoney wart charming, and then Chris flies across a chamber on his (unpredictably stubborn) broomstick while Peggatty throws firebombs at him... or at the floor, really, while Chris is up in the air!

Chris then encounters Greystagg, who is angered by his disguise and insists that he gives it up. She agrees to help Chris in exchange for the witch amber, and tries to coax him to say what he wants from her. The advisors have forgotten that Greystagg mentioned a blocked-off causeway during the spyglass sequence, and when it becomes obvious (after an unnecessarily long time) that they are not going to remember this snippet, Greystagg mentions the causeway herself, and reveals that a pooka is guarding it. The pooka's name is written on a scroll, and must be dispelled to get rid of the creature. The causeway must then be crossed on even numbers. Using this information, the team gets rid of the pooka - which apparently goes by the name of Falgo - and Chris crosses the causeway successfully.

Before they can do anything else, it's time for the exciting end to the series. Hordriss turns up on the screen and warns of Red Death's impending attack, so Treguard tasks Chris with retrieving Captain Nemanor's lightning rod from the Cloud Walker. Conveniently enough, a dwarf tunnel leads Chris straight to the ship, where he soon persuades Nemanor to donate his rod to help Treguard bring down Lord Fear's red dragon. Chris runs back through the dwarf tunnels with the lightning rod in hand, and the team is "accidentally" dismissed when Pickle strikes the quest table with the mace in order to activate the rod.

Summary: They seemed pretty sharp to me - I too had no idea what Greystagg was trying to coax them to ask her for the first time I saw this - but they were only ever going to get the chance to be final episode fillers.

POETRY CORNER

Michael's quest epitomises the rushed and jumbled mess that series 8 turned out to be, sadly. All right, Mike!

From Bristol came the men of Mike,
Their quest is one perhaps you'll like.
To change the codes was Fear's desire,
Then Mike dashed past great balls of fire.
Poor Rothberry was feeling low,
A bar of gold soon changed that, though.
Mike down to level two did float,
And took a ride in Sidriss' boat.
The Stinkwort proved to be a dud,
A skeletron was out for blood.
A FILLET spell would soon sort that,
With berries plain and wing of bat.
The team scored two with Snapper-Jack,
But then they didn't have the knack
To spot the way to level three,
And so an end came to their spree.
Far from the truth path Mike eschewed,
And he was promptly barbecued.

THE AUDIO SERIES IS THE THING

By Gemma Dwarwood

I am glad to be a part of the Knightmare Audio Series. It is now June 2011, and it's unbelievable that at this time last year I was recording my lines for the very first episode. Around that time, I wasn't very familiar with Knightmare and had only seen about three episodes, but since then I've seen quite a lot, particularly the first three series, which the Audio Series is based on.

When the first episode of the Audio Series was released, I could imagine the actual quest taking place in my head and the voices and sound effects clearly showed what was going on. I was so pleased with the episode that I asked if I could be in more episodes and possibly voice a character as well as a dungeoneer/advisor. I was eventually cast as Velda, who first appeared in the fifth episode. I watched some episodes with Velda in them for inspiration, and I feel that I've created my own portrayal of her rather than directly copying Natasha Pope.

I have also had fun voicing various advisors, occasionally changing my accent. Most of the time when recording, I broke down in laughter whilst doing my lines, especially if I was using a different accent. Some lines I couldn't say without laughing! One funny thing I couldn't help noticing with advisors I played was that in Episode 10, Sarah (the advisor I played) said "I swear that's a man!" when referring to Mrs Grimwold, but two episodes before, my advisor (Tamsin) said that Mrs Grimwold "looks more like a woman to me" - how coincidental that I said both of those lines!

I think the cast has done an amazing job with their characters, particularly Jake and Ross. Both of them have voiced countless characters, and when you hear two people voiced by the same person in one scene, sometimes you won't believe it's the same person doing both voices! A good example of this is in the recently aired Episode 12, where Scott (the dungeoneer, voiced by Ross) is talking to Mrs Grimwold (also voiced by Ross). I also think Rosey is a good voice actress, particularly when it comes to Gretel. Her impression sounds so much like Audrey Jenkinson, and I just love her voice! I also love her version of Morghanna, because I love female villains.

I think all the cast members are brilliant, and they've made each character their own. I also love the new character exclusive to the Audio

Series - Hansel, Gretel's brother. (Hmm, where have I seen those two names paired together before?) I like the fact that he (unlike Gretel) has a German accent, and the fact that Jake can pull off just about any accent, with characters and advisors - another great one is his Scottish accent on McGrew.

With regards to the teams in the Audio Series, I love them! There have been all different kinds of teams, from Mel's chavvy team (Team 4), where Darren is constantly yelled at by the female members, to the dim-witted schoolkids in Cordelia's team (Team 6), to the giggly girls in Selena's team (Team 8), to Scott's team (the current team, Team 10), the advisors of which I created. I based the advisors on real people - Natalie is constantly bossy and argumentative, Henry is the calm peacemaker, and Jenny is the smart one. Jenny was the one advisor I hadn't characterised at the time, but I was very pleased with the way she turned out in the final script and I like how Jake and Ross wrote her. When I listened to Episode 12, I felt like my creations - the advisors - had come alive more-or-less just as I planned them! As with the characters, the various actors make each advisor their own and bring them to life, and they are very convincing as they make up a typical team.

I am very pleased with the episodes; each one is more exciting than the last. The Nightmare theme played at the beginning makes it feel like a real episode. I also love the recaps at the beginning where Treguard explains what happened in the last episode... in rhyme! The various music and sound effects are very fitting too - I could have sworn that I heard music from a Harry Potter game in the background of part of Episode 4! My favourite episode is Episode 8, because it shows how well (or badly) two different teams can do. For most of the episode, we have Aden's team (Episodes 6-8), who successfully conquer the Dungeon, then we have Cordelia and co, who fail on level one in not even ten minutes - to quote Treguard in the recap for Episode 9, they "showed us how not to do it".

Overall, I am very pleased with the whole thing. I am currently writing the script for the eleventh and final team of the series, using episodes of Nightmare and the Audio Series for inspiration. The whole project is amazing, and proves that it was written by true Nightmare fans. Ironically, most of the actors (many of whom came from the Raven Forum, including me) weren't very familiar with Nightmare prior to the series, or were very young when Nightmare ended or were born after it ended. I never thought we would have so many people on the team!

I like the fact that the Audio Series is based partly on the Nightmare episodes with original material thrown in here and there. I particularly liked the Folly/Gretel storyline. It made me feel like they were in love with each other, especially with Folly's gloominess in Episode 12 after Gretel went back to Germany. Folly's conflict with Hansel in Episode 9 added to the drama, which is another reason why Hansel was a great addition to the series. I feel like there should be more original characters if we ever do a second series... which I hope we do!

I would like to thank Jake and Ross for letting me be part of this awesome project, and (along with Rosey) for creating brilliant scripts. I also want to thank all the actors; you have all been great fun to work with! Also, a big thank-you to the fans for their great support. I hope another series is made, although I feel that the new series will be based on later Nightmare series and therefore won't include Velda, but I look forward to voicing other characters and advisors. I can't believe it's been a year since we started, and that the series will be coming to a close in a few months. I really just can't say how happy I am right now! Once again, I am glad to be part of this project and it's been really fun!

JAKE'S ART DESK

I drew these pictures during lunchtimes at secondary school when I was inside and bored. Yes, I should have taken the opportunity to catch up on some homework, but this was much more fun! These pictures aren't really any good, of course - I've always been rubbish at drawing! But they kept me amused and I'm rather fond of them. They were all done during the academic year 1996/1997, when I was in Year 9.





FINAL MESSAGE FROM ME

And so, at last, after fifteen-and-a-half years of desperately attempting to keep Knightmare alive in some small way, The Eye Shield fanzine comes to an end. With ceaseless toil and unending love, I myself have produced a new issue every two months for the past ten years, and I am and always will be immensely proud of this great achievement. Every single one of Knightmare's characters, creatures, puzzles and quests has now been covered in the relevant sections of TES (some more than once) and so Knightmare has been fully chronicled within the hallowed pages of The Eye Shield.

A big thank you from Ross "Raven's Eye" Thompson for all the hard work you've been putting in over the years with your fanzine. Creating all these issues full of Knightmare goodies is definitely something to be proud of. I should also note that plenty of yours and Paul's ideas have helped inspire my "The Raven's Eye" magazine. So well done to Jake and congratulations on a great run with The Eye Shield!

As you may remember from some of my previous wafflings, I always wanted TES to be resurrected in some form after its initial demise in December 1997, because I thought that (after only nine issues) it had so much left to do - not only in terms of its regular features, but also as a forum for all the Knightmare stories and articles that fans were hopefully aching to write. After ten web-based years, I really think TES has done everything it had the potential to do, and everything I wanted it to do. I will always be immensely pleased with and proud of TES, and I really hope that its archived issues will continue to be perused and enjoyed until the end of time, but this is the end of the new material because, to put it bluntly, I've finished!

I want to say a huge "THANK-YOU!" to anyone and everyone who has ever read and/or contributed to TES, including (but by no means limited to) Rosey Collins, Ross Thompson, Liam Callaghan, Gemma Dwarwood and, of course, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne's Paul McIntosh, who came up with the original idea for The Eye Shield way back in 1995, then painstakingly produced nine wonderful issues on paper (yes, paper!) before finally handing the baton on to me with great support and enthusiasm when the time came. And just to make things perfectly clear, the baton is not going to be handed on again - to reiterate, this is the end of The Eye Shield!

As for me, I am semi-retiring (maybe even three-quarter-retiring!) from the world of Knightmare nostalgia, quite simply because (for various

practical and personal reasons) I have nothing left to give. I leave you with this photograph of me at age 4 as a memento of our time together - this is what I looked like back in 1987, when Knightmare came into my life so unexpectedly, and decided to stay forever.



So now you know just who's been lurking behind the keyboard all this time - after twenty-four years, I can assure you that I still look exactly like this. I am Jake "Eyeshield" Collins. Thanks for reading, and goodbye.

Jake Collins